

New Format

Vedanta Sandesh

Monthly Newsletter of Vedanta Mission

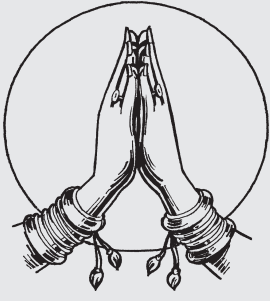
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Enlightened Life: The Culmination of Festival of Lights



Vedanta Sandesh

Spreading Love & Light

Monthly Newsletter of Vedanta Mission

Sharing the message of Vedanta and Sanatan Dharma

On the Net since Guru Poornima 1995

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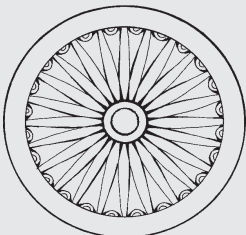
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From Poojya Guruji

Hari om!

Vedanta Sandesh enters yet another milestone. From this month onwards I am handing over the editorship of Vedanta Sandesh to Swamini Samatananda.

We are also starting a new experimental format. This pdf format will help us to take this first electronic magazine of Vedanta and Sanatan Dharma to more people around the world. We plan to use this format on sites like scribd, issuu etc, so as to present VS in flip-book format too.

In our Vedanta Section, we shall start a systematic, shloka-by-shloka study of Atma-Bodha. Self-Knowledge is the way to liberation from all grief & sorrow. The entire team of Vedanta Mission is inspired to take the divine message of Vedanta to as many people as possible, because we sincerely believe that this alone will help bring about greater 'Love & Light' in the world.

With Best Wishes,

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Atma Bodha - Introduction

Swamini Samatananda

It has been the basic desire of man to feel eternally contented, joyous and secure. A child is never taught to have desires, to be possessive and protective, yet we see that a child starts reflecting these qualities from the time he starts becoming conscious of himself and the world around him. Not only does man have these desires but he also constantly strives to fulfill and sustain them.

We all try to make the maximum amount of money, be well equipped with the best of gadgets, wear the best of clothes, earn a great status, and have nice relationships too. But the fact remains that although the desire to be eternally contented, happy and secure is natural and the effort intense yet what we finally achieve is a glimpse of joy quietly holding the hands of insecurity. We may have the best Tomtom to give us directions on the roads, but unfortunately the navigator 'Tomtom' of life is definitely profoundly confused. So then what is it that can truly give us satisfaction and permanent freedom from the rollercoast of pain and pleasure, security and insecurity. A person who is sincere about his life and wishes to direct it on the right track will question his own navigation system. Are the present sources of my happiness like money, status, relationships, objects truly the source of happiness? Does security truly lie in the strive to hold on to things really hard? Or is there a need to question our very definitions and convictions regarding our sources of happiness and the understanding of the self.

Fortunately for us even though most of us don't bother to question life and ourselves, there have been great thinkers who

not only questioned certain convictions but also got the answers to direct life on the right path of contentment. These masters have whole heartedly provided us with the indepth library of knowledge to bring us on the right track of life. This ocean of knowledge is available in the form of our scriptures which are like a guiding light house amidst the seas.

The thrust of the scriptures lies in coming to realise that even though initially the desire to be fully contented is not wrong but the journey must be made inwards, instead of frantically searching in the outside world. The knowledge of the world and its objects is not enough, one must first have the knowledge of the self. It is a fundamental misbelief that life flows from the outside to the inside, the fact is that life actually flows from the inside to the outside, The way my mind and attitude is towards anything, so will be the creation outside. Therefore it is important that we gain the right knowledge of the self. This divine knowledge is beautifully explained in one of the fundamental scriptures of Vedanta called 'Atma Bodha', which means the 'Knowledge of the Self'.

Although 'Atma Bodha' is a text gifted to us by Sri Adi Shankaracharyaji, but like all scriptures it is a bouquet of flowers collected from the garden of the Upanishads. It contains sixty-eight slokas which explain to us the fundamental principles of vedanta. Any spiritual aspirant who wishes to dive deep into the knowledge of the truth explained in Vedanta, must first take the shower of the fundamentals of Vedanta explained in 'Prakaran Grantha's'. Prakaran Granthas are texts

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- Sw. SS

which introduce us to fundamental definitions and principles of this knowledge to prepare us to understand clearly the process of this knowledge. The scriptures, then take us through the indepth process of learning are known as Shastras.

The beauty of this prakaran or fundamental text is that the basic definitions and principles are explained by Sri Shankaracharyaji with help of examples quoted in every sloka of the text. Such a style expressed by such creative masters is a tempting and inviting fragrance for seekers of this knowledge to come into this beautiful garden and gather the flowers of knowledge.

Let us realise this fact that the basic problem which brings about unbearable pain and inconsistency in life is not the lack of worldly objects and their experience, neither wealth, nor failures of relationships or careers. It is only the sheer ignorance of the knowledge of the true nature of the self and facts about the objective world. Just as knowledge is power in every field of worldly life so also knowledge of the true nature of the self and the objective world

is the light that will free us from the darkness of ignorance, which leads to constant misery. It is ignorance that compels us to see ourselves as limited and forces us to be on a constant hunt for happiness in the world outside.

The only requirement to be inspired for this knowledge is to question one's own present understanding about the sources of fulfillment and security, to question ones own understanding of the self. This questioning alone opens the doors of this knowledge.

There is no other means other than knowledge to free one's self from the shackles of feeling limited and seekership. All our efforts to gain material prosperity, social status, secure realtionships, and objective experiences are unfortunately illusionary escape measures and make us nothing less than an alocoholic or drug addict who escapes this world momentarily and gets a temporary high.

So let us be inspired by Self-Knowledge gifted to us by the great Rishis and aim to thoroughly study scriptures like the 'Atma Bodha'.

Gandhari's Impatience



"The Pandavas were born out of mantra shakti (the power of certain sacred formulas). When Yudhistira, the oldest of the five Pandava brothers, was born to Kunti through the invocation of a deity, Gandhari, who was pregnant at the time, became extremely impatient. She beat her own stomach so hard that she miscarried and gave birth to a lump of flesh. At that moment, a great sage took pity on her and came to her aid. He divided the lump of flesh into a hundred pieces and placed them in a hundred sealed pots. He filled the pots with his life energy and instructed Gandhari not to open them before a certain period of time. But again, Gandhari was so impatient that she

couldn't wait, and she opened the pots before she was supposed to. As a result, the Kauravas were born imperfect and evil-minded. They were instrumental in the destruction of the entire clan."

" My children, because of her impatience, Gandhari couldn't wait for the sankalpa (resolve) of the sage to take effect. Had she been patient enough, she would have had brilliant, virtuous sons like the Pandavas. But her impatience destroyed the potential goodness and beauty of that part of creation that was the Kauravas. As a result of her impatience, the evil prince, Duryodhana, was born as the eldest of her children. Thus her impatience was the cause of terrible destruction."



Bhai-Dooj Festival

Two days after Diwali is festival of Bhai-Dooj. Bhai means 'Brother', and Dooj means the second day of the month, in this case of the month of Kartik.

Out of numerous family relations, the bond between a brother and his sister is unique. The rituals and customs of Bhai or Bhaiya Dooj festival provides a heartfelt look at the dynamics of lifelong sibling relationships.

As the legend goes, Yamraj, the god of death visited his sister Yamuna on this particular day. She put the auspicious tilak on his forehead, garlanded him and fed him with lovingly made special dishes and sweets, they spoke to each other and enjoyed themselves. While parting Yamraj gave her a special gift as a token of his love and in return Yamuna also gave him a lovely gift which she had made with her own hands. That day Yamraj announced that anyone who goes to his sisters place on this day and affirms his love & protection for his sister will receive my special blessings and will also have a peaceful end. Therefore this day of Bhaiya Dooj is also known by the name of 'Yama-Dwitiya'. Since then this day is being observed as a symbol of love between sisters and brothers. As shown by Yamaraj himself brothers should go to their sister's house on this day.

Lord Krishna, after slaying the Narakasura demon, went to his sister Subhadra, who welcomed him with a lamp, flowers and sweets, she put a tika on her brother's forehead and then did aarti.

There is another legend associated with Bhai- Dooj too, and that is of Maharaj Bali and Lord Vishnu.

When Bhagwan Vamandev was pleased with Maharaj Bali and appeared in the form of Lord Vishnu, Bali asked a boon that Lord Vishnu should be on every door of Patalaloka. Lord Vishnu agreed and became Dwarapala of Bali. When Naradji took this news to Goddess Lakshmi, she was in great distress. In order to make her husband return back to his original place, Laxmi played a trick on Bali. She goes to Bali as a poor woman seeking help. She says to Bali that she doesn't have a brother and would dearly like one. When Bali said that from now onwards he will be her brother and told her to ask anything that she needs. With this special relationship in place, Laxmi said that, O Dear Brother! You have my everything in your service, so please release my husband Lord Vishnu from the work of a door-keeper. Bali immediately agreed and thus, Lord Vishnu was released.

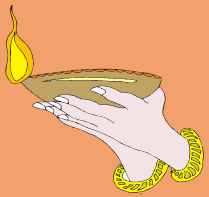
Bhaiya Dooj is celebrated where in the sisters puts tilak on her brother's forehead. After which there is Aarti, done by sisters to ward off all the evil effects surrounding their beloved brothers. A special prayer sloka too is chanted which goes like this:

'Bhratus tabaa grajaataaham, Bhunksa bhaktamidam shuvam Preetaye yama raajasya Yamunaah Visheshatah.'

I'm your sister, Eat this sacred rice, For the pleasure of 'Yam Raj' and 'Yamuna'.

After the puja, sisters receive gifts and blessings from their brothers. Sisters too expresses their love by preparing food & sweets for their brothers, preferably herself.

Express your love in whatever way possible, but one should use such occasions to celebrate and increase the bonds of love between this special relationship between brothers & sisters.



Besides the noble art of getting things done, there is a nobler art of leaving things undone. The wisdom of life consists in the elimination of non-essentials.

- Lin Yutang



I'd rather be a failure at something I love than a success at something I hate.

- George Burns

God's Compassion

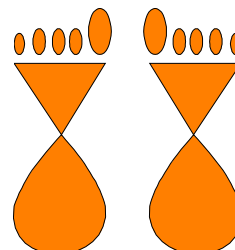
A man once dreamt that he was sitting on the banks of a river. He saw that the place where he sat had a path of footprints untill some distance. The path had impressions of footprints of two people. Observing them closely he realised that these were past impressions of his own life. One of the footprints were his and the other pair of prints were of God.

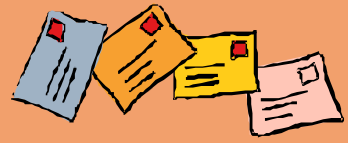
He was very happy and overwhelmed to see that God was always with him in the journey of his life. But he noticed that at some intervals of the path there was only one pair of footprints, and that was the time when situations were challenging and difficult. His obvious inference was that during these moments of distress, he should have been alone, this meant that during such moments the Lord had abandoned him.

This made him sad and he complained to God saying, My Dear God! Is this fair that during conducive times you walked beside me and when I needed you most you left me, or is it that because you left, I was sad.

Hearing these child like words the Lord smiled and said, "My Dear!" Look at the impressions closely! Whose footprints are these? These are not the impressions of your feet but they are mine. During difficult times I knew it would be difficult for you to walk, so I lifted you in my arms and crossed the rough patches.

The devotee was indeed overwhelmed.





Essence of Yoga System

Question from Mark Romano:

Can i ask you Maharaj about the yoga system and how one should apply such yogas in ones daily life?

Answer from Poojya Guruji:

The application of Yoga system is basically aimed to bring about a particular state of mind. A mind which is free of conditioned and reactive habit to the various positive or negative situations; a mind which is fully awake to the present moment; one where all actions are a product of thoughtfulness and sensitivity; a mind which is not inflicted by a deep sense of lack and want, but has a air of fulfillment and pleasantness about it; a mind which can act with love rather than self-centricity; and therefore because of all these qualities there is an overall peace, yet is inspired in whatever field it is inclined, but in a selfless way, meaning it enjoys doing what it does rather than looking forward to some fulfillment beyond the horizon. Such a mind is an ideal student, discussion with him or her culminates in some valid communication.

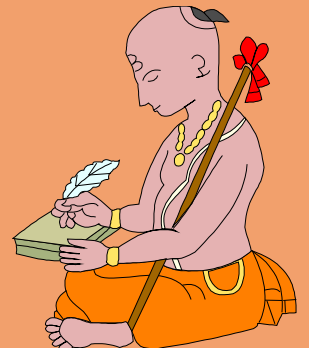
Even though a person who practices Yoga is a person with a so called pure mind, yet there are some obvious limitations too, this person still takes the world as different, he/she still takes him/herself to be a doer and wants to experience more & better joys, such a person is still identified with his/her body, and is therefore existing only where the physical body exists. Statements like 'I am all pervading' is more of a poetry for him, yet if properly explained by right people communication can certainly take place. These people still need the last quantum jump of the liberating Self-Knowledge (of the Atma being the one non-dual Brahman), yet are like dry hay where even a spark can bring about a conflagration.

Another important thing about any school of Yoga is the thrust and importance given to integrate the personality. Whether it is Gyana Yoga or Bhakti or Raja Yoga etc, all prescribe ways and means to integrate the different faculties of our personality, this helps us to live every moment fully without any regrets, worries or anxieties.

So if you keep these objectives in mind and practice any Yoga then you would have truly applied the Yoga in your life. To the extent you attain any of the above objectives to that extent your sadhana will be successful. The details of every Yoga is another matter and is available in any text of that particular Yoga.

A mind which is free from conditioned and reactive habits, a mind which is not inflicted by a deep sense of lack and want, but has a air of fulfillment and pleasantness about it - is a mind of a Yogi

- Swami Atmananda



Vedanta Mission / Ashram Programs



Gita Gyana Yagna, Jodhpur:

A five days Gita Gyana Yagna was organized at Jodhpur from 1st to 5th Oct 2008. The discourse series were conducted by Poojya Swamini Amitanandaji, and the subject matter of the discourses was Gita Chapter 17.

On 5th Oct, Poojya Swaminiji visited Santosh Ashram at Sojatcity and addressed the children of the school there.



Sanyas Deeksha of Poojya Guruji, Indore:

On 10th Oct was the Sanyas Deeksha day of Poojya Guruji. It was the 20th anniversary of his initiation, which was done at Sidhbari by Poojya Gurudev Swami Chinmayanandaji.

In the morning Poojya Guruji conducted the Rudrabhisheka and later in the evening there was a get together of devotees, with light cultural programs, followed by dinner, offered by Sh Vinod Aroraji.



Rudrabhisheka by Thakrar's, Indore:

Sh Harishbhai and Kirtiben Thakrar, from Wellingborough, UK, visited Vedanta Ashram for a week.

The couple timed their visit in such a way that they could celebrate their 25th Marriage Anniversary, Birthday at the pious and peaceful place like Vedanta Ashram. They visited the two Jyotirlingas near Indore, and participated in all the ashram programs with great devotion.



Visit to Nakhrali Dhani:

Poojya Guruji visited Nakhrali Dhani alongwith Swamini Amitananda and Swamini Amitananda, and Sh & Smt Thakrara's, our guests from UK.

Nakhrali Dhani is a well-known village resort depicting a village of Rajasthan.



Yogasana Shivir, Indore:

A month long Yoga Asana Course was inaugurated at Vedanta Ashram, Indore on 13th Oct 2008. The course is being conducted by Sh Atma Bhakta, a trained teacher of Satyananda Yoga Kendra, Indore.

The class starts everyday at sharp 6.00 AM on the ashram terrace, and around 16-18 people are regularly attending the classes. The camp is till 15th Nov.

Vedanta Mission Programs-2

Sharad Poornima Celebration, Indore:

On 15th Oct was the Sharad Poornima, the advent of winter season. The moon is at its best on this day. It is believed that on this day the moon showers Amruta, so on this day people should prepare Kheer and keep it in the moonlight, and perform bhajans etc, and later eat that prasad for a happy and healthy life.

A beautiful alter of Lord Krishna was prepared on the terrace stage. There were bhajans, stories etc, and later the divine prasad.

Gita Gyana Yagna, Secunderabad:

A four days Gita Gyana Yagna was organized at Secunderabad from 16th to 19th Oct 2008. The discourse series were conducted by Poojya Swamini Amitanandaji, and the subject matter of the discourses was Gita Chapter 17.

On 16th, Poojya Swaminiji visited the well-known Gitanjali School, and addressed the girls there.

Diwali Celebrations, Indore:

This year the Diwali was on the 28th of Oct. Ashram was cleaned and tastefully decorated with lights.

Sh Ramakantbhai and Smt Ushaben Trivedi from Ahmedabad were at the Ashram for the occasion. They performed the main Mahalaxmi Pujan. Later there was the crackers fun and the flow of visitors.

Regular Classes at Vedanta Ashram, Indore:

Poojya Guruji is taking daily classes on Kena Upanishad, along with Shankar Bhashya. After the Pada-Bhashya of the Introduction and the first mantra, nowadays the Vakya Bhashya of the same is going on.

On Poojya Swamini Amitanandaji is conducting daily classes on Bhagwad Gita, nowadays the 6th chapter is in progress. The weekly Balvihar class for children is being conducted by Poojya Swamini Samatanandaji and P. Swamini Poornanandaji.



Vedanta Mission - Forthcoming Programs



Gita Gyana Yagna, Mhow :

Poojya Swamini Samatanandaji will conduct a three days Gita Gyana Yagna at Gita Bhavan, Mhow from 1st to 3rd Nov. The subject matter of the discourses will be "Sattwic Jeevan".

Gita Gyana Yagna, Dahisar :

Poojya Swamini Amitanandaji will conduct a five days Gita Gyana Yagna at Dahisar, Mumbai from 4th to 8th Nov. The subject matter of the discourses will be Gita Chapter 7.

Gita Gyana Yagna, Ahmedabad :

Poojya Swamini Amitanandaji will conduct a week long Gita Gyana Yagna at Ramkrishna Kendra at Maninagar, Ahmedabad from 17th to 23rd Nov.

Gita Gyana Yagna, Bhavnagar :

Poojya Swamini Samatanandaji will conduct a eight days Gita Gyana Yagna at Sw Ramdas Ashram, Bhavnagar from 6th to 13th Nov.

Birthday of Swamini Samatanandaji :

The devotees and ashram inmates shall celebrate the birthday Poojya Swamini Samatanandaji on 15th Nov.

Gita Jayanti, Indore :

Gita Jayanti will be celebrated by Poojya Guruji and other Ashram Mahatmas at Indore on 9th Dec.

Gita Gyana Yagna, Mumbai :

Poojya Guruji will conduct a five days Gita Gyana Yagna at National College, Bandra, Mumbai from 17th to 21st Dec 2008.

Hari om !

Check out for other issues of Vedanta Sandesh at:
<http://www.vmission.org.in/mission/ezone.htm>



Net Publication of Vedaanta Mission

Om Tat Sat